

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0105

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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USMISSION NATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: INITIAL REACTION TO SUAREZ SPEECH/CANDIDACY

1. INITIAL PRESS AND POLITICAL REACTION IN PUBLIC TO PRIME MINISTER SUAREZ' SPEECH ANNOUNCING HIS CANDIDACY (SUMMARY PROVIDED SEPTEL) FOLLOWS EXPECTED LINES: FAVORABLE IN THE CENTER; CRITICAL ON THE LEFT AND PARTICULARLY THE RIGHT.

2. OF THE MADRID DAILIES:

--"EL PAIS" (LIBERAL INDEPENDENT) HAS NOT YET COMMENTED EDITORIALY. COLUMNIST JUAN LUIS CEBRIAN CRITICIZED THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENT AS PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VERY PROBLEM (A WEAK AND DISUNITED POLITICAL CENTER) WHICH THE SUAREZ CANDIDACY NOW PROPOSED TO SOLVE. "SPEAKING CYNICALLY," HE ADDED, "(SUAREZ' PROBLEM NOW) IS NOT HOW TO GAIN VOTES, BUT HOW TO LOSE THEM," CITING THE DANGER OF AN "OMNIPOTENT" CENTER UNDER GOVERNMENT PATRONAGE.

--"YA" (CATHOLIC MODERATE) EMPHASIZED IN ITS HEADLINES THE

"INDEPENDENT" NATURE OF HIS CANDIDACY AND HIS PLEDGE NOT TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CAMPAIGNING. EDITORIALY, THE PAPER ASKED "COULD THERE HAVE BEEN A BETTER WAY? WE DON'T SAY NO; BUT WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS A CENTER...WE BELIEVE THAT IF SUAREZ HAD NOT PRESENTED HIMSELF EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE GONE WORSE." "YA" STOPPED JUST SHORT OF ENDORSING SUAREZ, SAYING "WHAT IS NEEDED IS SOMEONE WHO...HIMSELF REPRESENTS THE 'BALANCE POINT ON THE SCALE'". THIS IS WHAT...WE BELIEVE, ON GOOD GROUNDS, THAT SUAREZ WILL BE."

--PRO-GOVERNMENT "ARRIBA" NATURALLY WELCOMED SUAREZ TO THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.

--CONSERVATIVE (PRO-ALIANZA POPULAR) "ABC" TOOK A MODERATE LINE. WHILE RESERVING FOR FUTURE COMMENT THE SUBSTANTIVE POINTS IN HIS SPEECH (ESPECIALLY PCE LEGALIZATION AND HIS ACTUAL CANDIDACY), "ABC" PRAISED THE "TONE AND STYLE" OF THE SPEECH, ITS SERIOUSNESS, AND PLEDGED THAT, "HE CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON OUR SUPPORT IN THE DETERMINATION TO MAKE SPAIN A JUST AND POLITICALLY DEVELOPED COUNTRY".

--"DIARIO 16" (LEFT-LEANING, SENSATIONALIST, BUT SOMETIMES PRO-SUAREZ) EDITORIALIZED, "THEY ARE COOKING IT, IN THE END THEY DON'T COOK BADLY, AND WE ARE EATING IT." COMMENTING ON THE IRONY OF A FRANCOIST GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY TO DEMOCRACY, "DIARIO 16" CALLED SUAREZ THE PROBABLY VICTOR OF THE ELECTIONS AND SAID "WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, THIS CANNOT HELP BUT BE GOOD NEWS".

3. POLITICAL REACTION FOLLOWS:

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--GONZALO FERNANDEZ DE LA MORA (RIGHT-WING IDEOLOGUE NOW IN THE ALIANZA POPULAR) TOOK THE NOW-FAMILIAR LINE THAT SUAREZ IS A MINISTER OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THUS BARRED FROM RUNNING, AND ALSO CITED THE DANGER OF "ELECTIONS FROM ABOVE".

--JOAQUIN SASTRUSTEGUI (ALIANZA LIBERAL) CALLED IT "A GREAT SPEECH" BUT AN ERRONEOUS DECISION.

--JOAQUIN RUIZ GIMENEZ (FEDERACION DE LA DEMOCRACIA CRISTINIANA), WHILE DISAGREEING WITH HIS DECISION TO DESCEND FROM HIS ABOVE-THE-BATTLE POSITION, EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE IN SUAREZ' PLEDGE NOT TO ABUSE GOVERNMENTAL POWER FOR ELECTION PURPOSES.

--ANTONIO GARCIA LOPEZ (PARTIDO SOCIALISTA DEMOCRATICO ESPANOL) OBSERVED THAT A "MODERATE CENTER" AS ESPOUSED BY SUAREZ DID NOT CONSTITUTE A POLITICAL PROGRAM, AND SAID IT REMINDED HIM OF THE PATRIOTIC UNION OF DICTATOR PRIMO DE RIVERA.

--RAUL MORODO (PARTIDO SOCIALISTA POPULAR) TERMED THE JUSTIFICATION OF PCE LEGALIZATION "EXCESSIVE", AND EXPRESSED HOPE SUAREZ WOULD HELP THE LEFT BY PULLING MORE VOTES FROM ALIANZA POPULAR.

--FELIPE GONZALEZ (PSOE) CRITICIZED SUAREZ FOR TERMING
HIMSELF THE "ONLY LATERNATIVE" TO POLITICAL POLARIZATION.
--MARCELINO CAMACHO (PCE) APPROVED AN GENERAL GERMS, THOUGH
ADOPTING A "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE ON SUAREZ' PLEDGED
GOVERNMENTAL ELECTORAL "NEUTRALITY".
--VARIOUS FIGURES FROM CENTRO DEMOCRATICO COMMENTED,
NATURALLY WITH APPROVAL.
--MANUEL FRAGA IRIBARNE (ALIANZA POPULAR), CALLING
THE SPEECH "CONFUSED AND INSUFFICIENT ABOUT THE PRESENT
AND TOTALLY OBSCURE ABOUT THE FUTURE", CHALLENGED SUAREZ
TO A TELEVISED DEBATE WITH OTHER LEADERS.STABLER

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